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New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"



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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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New Orleans in Retrospect

Where We Are 16 Years After Hurricane Katrina



Sixteen years ago, New Orleans changed forever, due to Hurricane Katrina and the breaching of the levees. Today, the city is still rebuilding and in some ways it's "A Tale of Two Cities."

Renetta Burrell Perry
Data News Weekly Contributor

Everyone in the world can identify with B.C. and A.C. as the designations of Before Christ and After Christ, but New Orleanians have our own very personal designations to be reckoned with: B.K. and A.K.

Before Katrina and After Katrina. Sixteen years ago, when news was spread that a tropical depression was forming over the Bahamas, New Orleanians weren't overly concerned. This was all-too-commonplace, that a storm was forming, and only God knew where it would end up. That was around August 23, 2005. But the next day, the storm had threatened the State of

Florida and was given its own name - Hurricane Katrina. In the days to follow, the storm had its way with Florida (killing 14 people) and wound up in the Gulf of Mexico, where it threatened the State of Louisiana and was upgraded from a Category 3 to a Category 5 hurricane. When it made landfall on August 29th, as a Cat 3, it claimed utter devastation to both Louisiana and Mis-

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Mississippi, racking up a tally of nearly 2,000 lives lost and a price tag of \$96 billion dollars in damages.

Statistically, Hurricane Katrina will go down in history as one of the worst hurricanes in modern day history. Over 1,500 people lost their lives in Louisiana alone, many of whom died horrible deaths, drowning in their own homes, atop their own rooftops, and in their own attics, where they sought refuge from the rising waters which reached heights of 15-plus feet in many areas. New Orleans bore the brunt of that misery. The blame was plentiful, from the President's and FEMA's mishandling of the disaster to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the breaching of the 17th Street Canal. Many theories surfaced, some surrounding the 17th Street Canal and the MRGO (Mississippi River Gulf Outlet) being purposely blown to shift waters towards the heavily African American populated Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East areas and away from more affluent areas of the City.

But blame and theories aside, the facts were astonishing, shock-



The City of New Orleans had many who stepped up to inspire and bring people together. One is the late Wilbert "Mr. Chill" Wilson. A local barbershop owner turned humanitarian, who championed many social causes. His wife, Joyce Wilson continues to own and operate Mr. Chill's First Class Cuts and his legacy of service and giving back to the people of the City of New Orleans.

ing, and anguishing. Over 300,000 homes were flooded in the city and over 700,000 citizens were displaced. Amid the mold, debris and aftermath of a city that had sustained what no other major American city had, pockets of hope could still be found then and are still found now.

Fast forward to 2021 and our city remains influx with tourists, even within the confines of a Global

Pandemic, and the remnants of Hurricane Katrina are hard to find. Sure, the landscape of the city has changed drastically to those of us who remember it B.K. (prompting the A.K. created phrase, "Ain't Dere No More"), but the heartbeat of the city still resonates a steady, staccato beat; and our colors are still Purple, Green, and Gold and Black and Gold. We are still plagued with the turbulent misfortunes that most



Local Theater owner Anthony Bean feels the city must do more to help its young people and build bridges of opportunity from them. He continues through the Anthony Bean Community Theater (ABCT), to give young people a positive outlet and inspire them to pursue greatness.

major cities are faced with crime, homelessness, joblessness, and the like, but we still greet passersby with a smile and a heartfelt "good morning" or "good evening."

Perhaps it's the heavy dose of southern hospitality that runs through our veins, or maybe it's our innate, laissez faire spirit that enables this strong and steady

resilience. Whatever the case, the element that has kept New Orleans alive and relevant A.K. will continue to keep it alive and relevant for many more years to come. That element, that "je ne sais quoi", is its people. And as long as we are here with all of our magic, New Orleans ain't going nowhere, anytime soon.

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Geaux Naturalle'

Where Natural Wellness Meets Luxury. A Lux Event Held At Drink Beauty Coffee Shop

Photos by Glenn Summers
Data News Weekly
Photographer

Geaux Naturalle is a natural products company founded in 2017 by LeKesiah Washington-Fleury, aka Natural Le. Le wanted to transition into a more healthy and natural lifestyle. Natural in the sense of consuming no harsh chemicals into the body including hair, face, body, digestive system, etc. Healthy in the sense of detoxing and ridding the body of chemicals and harmful toxins.

Right: LaKesiah Washington-Fleury (c) at a recent event promoting her product Geaux Naturalle' that focuses on more natural approaches to health, beauty and wellness.



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Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

New Orleans & Company Statement on Passing of Cheryl Teamer

Stephen Perry
President and CEO, New Orleans & Company

It is with profound shock and sadness that we share the passing of our friend and colleague Cheryl Teamer, New Orleans & Company's Senior Vice President of Public Affairs since 2014.

Cheryl was a talented Attorney and Executive and a fierce advocate for the hospitality workforce. She contributed so much to New Orleans & Company's mission, including organizing dozens of job fests around the community. Her most recent job fests connected thousands of job seekers and employers and offered vaccines onsite to help

the tourism industry recover more quickly from the Pandemic. Cheryl was a passionate New Orleanian whose impact on this community cannot be measured.

Cheryl was a former Chairperson of the New Orleans Aviation Board and was integral in the development of the new airport. She also chaired the Greater New Orleans Foundation. She was the founder of Teamer Strategy Group, an advocacy, government relations, and strategic planning firm. She was involved on many levels of public affairs and government at the city, state, and national level. Cheryl leaves so many friends, family and fans who were daily inspired by her



Cheryl Teamer

positivity and enthusiasm. She lit up every room she entered.

Stephen Perry, President and CEO of New Orleans & Company said, "Cheryl had one of the biggest hearts I have ever known. Our loss is immeasurable professionally and emotionally. We had known each other from our shared past in the legislature, her work for Mayor Morial and I for Governor Foster on so many projects building New Orleans, and we were always close, and I so deeply respected and loved her. Cheryl was not just the consummate professional chairing major boards and serving as a senior executive in our company, but she always lived with grace, integrity and passion and her loss is incalculable."

State & Local News

Blues Bikes Return to New Orleans

City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS — Blue Bikes will be rolling on city streets again starting this week, after a year's absence. Blue Krewe, the local, community-based non-profit that operates and manages the Bike-share Program, has relaunched the program with a fleet of 504 pedal-assist e-bikes.

Starting this week, Blue Krewe is placing Blue Bikes at hubs throughout the city; the full complement should be out on the streets by the end of the week and well in advance of Labor Day Weekend.

The initial fleet will be placed within the Bikeshare Program's service area. Residents, tourists, or visitors who have signed up for Blue Bikes can begin riding or sign up to use the Bikeshare Program.

"We are excited to see Blue Bikes returning to our streets sooner than expected, to give our residents and visitors more affordable transportation options," said Mayor LaToya Cantrell. "I want to encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the outdoors over Labor Day Weekend and spend some time bicycling around our city."



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"Blue Bikes returning to city streets means New Orleanians once again have a healthy, environ-

Blue Bikes, Continued on page 7.

Commentary

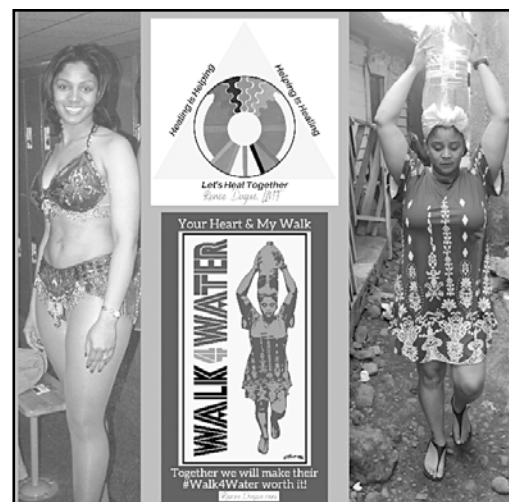
From Desire To Purpose... A Dreamer's Journey

"Running From To Walking For Water"

Renée Dugué
Co-Founder Reborn and Rising

Sixteen sweet years ago I was summertime fine, looking like a SU Dancing Doll, prancing through Harrah's Casino. Although I had exchanged my showgirl costume for an oversized purple dress-shirt and black slacks, I was still a hot girl! Whether dealing Blackjack or spinning The Big 6 Wheel, my table stayed packed with patrons placing their bets and letting the chips fall where they may. For forty hours a week, I entertained players and put on a show. What they didn't know was that my uniform was the mask I wore to hide the pain I was feeling. Inside I was reeling from the recent death of my sister, Katrina. Leukemia didn't care that she was a 33-year-old professional XU graduate, perfect wife, and mother. I struggled to understand why her, and I had no clue how to process grief. So, when a friend suggested a trip to The Bahamas to sip some Bahama Mamas and lift my spirits, I said laissez le bon temps rouler!

We landed on Paradise Island,



Renée Dugué snapped taking a break from her Harrah's Showgirl duties (circa 2004), carrying water fetched from a public tap in Buea, SW Cameroon (Jan. 2020).

and Atlantis was just what I needed to forget my blues until Tropical Storm Twelve forced us to leave. Not scared of a little rain, or ready to go home, we headed to Miami; and so, did the storm, now named Hurricane Katrina (how uncanny). Vacation cut short, we headed home to ride it out, while drinking hurricanes and hand grenades. The rest is familiar history. Mine

and thousands of people's lives as we knew it ended. Less publicized is the psychological devastation experienced and carried with us as we relocated, labeled as refugees within our own country. No manual on this manner of loss was included in care packages. No federal funds were allocated to walk us through the seven steps of grief supposedly cause by this Category 5 Natural Disaster. And yet Sixteen years later, made stronger with melanin, we are still standing. Washed up, washed out, knocked down...still we

rise. Crawling, stumbling, staggering...we'll still fight. Walk, run, fall, repeat as necessary...just keep your eyes set on a higher site.

As I write from Houston and you read from where you are, know that our lost loves are so incredibly proud. We are truly our ancestors' wildest dreams. We are reawakening our col-

Commentary, Continued on page 7.

FDA Approves Pfizer Vaccine

Data News Staff Edited
Report None

Pfizer's two-dose COVID-19 Vaccine has received full approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - the first jab to be licensed in the nation.

The vaccine had initially been given emergency use authorization. Its two shots, three weeks apart, are now fully approved for those aged 16 and older.

The approval is expected to set off more vaccine mandates by employers and organizations across the country.

It comes amid lingering vaccine hesitancy among many Americans.



The FDA recently approved the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine; this development may help those decide to get shots and to reach herd immunity and protect those contracting the virus from fatal outcomes.

In a statement, the FDA said its review for approval included data from approximately 44,000 people. The vaccine, which will now be marketed as Comirnaty, was found to be 91% effective in preventing COVID-19 Disease.

Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock said that the public "can be very confident" the vaccine meets high safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality standards.

With FDA approval, cities and states across the U.S. that are experiencing spikes in cases, with this latest development many are hoping this will convince more people to get COVID-19 Vaccine.

Commentary, Continued
from page 6.

lective spirituality to organize, educate, empower, care for, and protect ourselves. Each of us offering the gifts we have, contributing just where we are, one day at a time. Let's continue to honor them in all that we do. Be mindful to remain grateful, as you not only accept change but fully embrace it. Change is the only constant. I realize the difficulties faced losing my sister, Katrina, and then Hurricane Katrina were all necessary elements of my journey on my path from desire to purpose. As memories of 8/29/2005 resurface, be encouraged to connect with kindred souls who can wade with you through the lessons learned from the dark waters and times and inspire you to walk in truth and light as you move forward. Together we are stronger.

Blue Bikes, Continued
from page 6.

mentally friendly, affordable way to get to work to medical appointments or to just have fun," said Dr. Jeremy Wigginton, a Medical Director with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, Blue Bikes' title sponsor. "And with the ongoing COVID-19 surge, Bikeshare is a more socially distanced form of transportation than riding inside a vehicle with others. This will help people get around easily while staying safe and taking precautions to slow the spread of COVID-19, particularly the highly contagious Delta Variant."

State & Local News

Mask Mandate to Stay In Place for K-12 Louisiana Schools

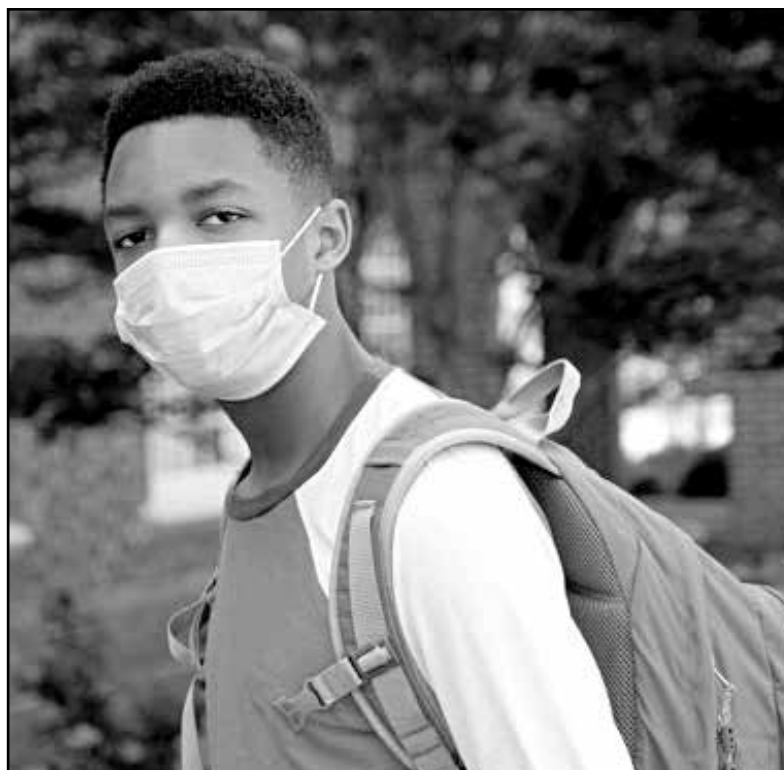
Data News Staff Edited
Report

BATON ROUGE, LA. — The State Board of Education announced they will not take up a second discussion of the governor's mask mandate's place in Louisiana schools after their first was disrupted by a crowd of maskless protesters.

This means schools in Louisiana will be required to follow Gov. John Bel Edwards' indoor mask mandate despite an opinion from Attorney General Jeff Landry indicating the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education had the final say about whether it applied to K-12 classrooms.

In a statement released Sunday night, the board, commonly referred to as BESE, defended their 8-2 decision to adjourn a meeting last week before the mask debate could begin, and said they have no plans to take the issue up again.

"When forced to make that decision last week, we were left with no choice but to prioritize the safety and health of those in the room over



BESE defended their 8-2 decision to adjourn a meeting last week before the mask debate could begin, and said they have no plans to take the issue up again.

citizens who were refusing to follow the law, adhere to basic rules of or-

der - all while putting the health of others at risk," the board wrote.

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